


BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

For Fiscal Year 2022

 Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
 RECEIVED: 03/17/2022 12:08:27 PM

Primary Applicant (Name and Address): WiConnect Wireless LLC 2670 East Main St Suite F Reedsburg WI 53959	Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx . Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions. Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022 at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted.		
	Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov		
	Date: March 17, 2022		
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>			
<p>Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>			
Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print) <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Dave Bangert</div>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Title <div style="text-align: center;">President</div> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Phone <div style="text-align: center;">608-524-1579</div> </td> </tr> </table>	Title <div style="text-align: center;">President</div>	Phone <div style="text-align: center;">608-524-1579</div>
Title <div style="text-align: center;">President</div>	Phone <div style="text-align: center;">608-524-1579</div>		
Signature of Authorized Representative 	Date <div style="text-align: center;">03/17/2022</div>		

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name WiConnect Wireless LLC	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$559,000
Federal Employer Identification No. 27-0690097	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$699,000
Contact Name and Title Dave Bangert, President	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$1,258,000
Telephone Number 608-524-1579	Project Name Willow Township FTTH
E-mail Address(es) dave@ccwis.com	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTH
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last Mile Fiber
Grant Manager Contact Name Dave Bangert	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number Dave@ccwis.com 6085241579
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations Public Partnership with Willow Township. See Section 3.2.1.C: for supporting letter of commitment and commitment of funds.	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) Fiber to the Home for under-served roads in Willow Township, Richland County WI.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 1G	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 1G
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 100Mb	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 100Mb
County or Counties served by this project Richland County	Community or Communities served by this project Willow Township
List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve WiConnect Wireless US Cellular Verizon Wireless	

ATT Wireless Bug Tussel Wireless	
Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in <u>Section 1.4</u> of the application instruction? (yes/no) No	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) No
For last mile projects or component, the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). 30	For last mile projects or components, the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). 161
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i> ? 10	Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i> ? 161
For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) Yes	Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no) no
Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no) no	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) no
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no) yes	

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

Budget & Income Summary



Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:
WiConnect Wireless LLC	Willow Township FTTH

Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees			\$
2	Equipment		\$ 381,000.00	\$ 381,000.00
3	Supplies	\$ 559,000.00		\$ 559,000.00
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)		\$ 318,000.00	\$ 318,000.00
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees			\$
6	Travel			\$
7	Other			\$
Total:		\$ 559,000.00	\$ 699,000.00	\$ 1,258,000.00
		55.6% match requested		

Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Willow Township Pledge	Other	Cash	\$ 50,000.00
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 50,000.00

Match total should be equal to pledge total. Please include all project contributions, including from the applicant.

Grant Application for WiConnect Wireless

2022 Wisconsin Broadband Access Grant

Project Name: Willow Township Fiber to the Home

3.2.1 Applicant identification and contact information

3.2.1.A:

Grant Applicant:

WiConnect Wireless LLC
2670 East Main Street Suite F
Reedsburg WI 53959
608-524-1579
David Bangert
President
Dave@ccwis.com
www.wicw.net

3.2.1.B:

Public Private Partner:

Willow Township
Address
Cazenovia WI 53924
Town Chairman: Tim Willis
3.2.1.C:

Town of Willow

19254 St Hwy 58 Cazenovia,
WI 53924

Tim Willis, Chairman

March 11, 2022

Mr. Dave Bangert:

The Town Board of Willow Township, located in the Northeast corner of Richland County, is proud to have the services of WiConnect Wireless in our township. With that being said, we are happy to financially support your efforts to install fiber optic services here in the future.

The Town of Willow is participating in the ARPA Grant program. The township will be receiving two ARPA grant payments totaling nearly sixty thousand dollars in 2021 and 2022. The Town Board has decided by 100% vote to commit \$50,000.00 of this money to WiConnect Wireless in order to support your "Fiber to the Home Project and Grant Proposal" being written to the Wisconsin Broadband Grant for 2022.

With the topography of our township, wireless is a must for continuous service to the people of our township. We appreciate your personal and business efforts to provide services to Willow township, as well as the local area amid the broadband giants. Best Wishes for continued success on your quest.

Best Regards,



Tim Willis, Chairman

Town of Willow Board Minutes of :

**TOWN OF WILLOW
THURSDAY, MARCH 10TH, 2022
6:00 PM**

ATTENDANCE: Tim Willis, Richard Wiedenfeld, Dave Fry, Deb Dickey, Devon Rupnow.

CITIZENS PRESENT: Randy Moe, John McNurlin, Dan Schwabenbauer, Dave Bangert

CALL TO ORDER: Tim Willis at 6:04 pm.

READ & APPROVE AGENDA: Read by Willis. Motion by Fry, 2nd by Wiedenfeld. Motion carried.

READ & APPROVE MINUTES: Emailed and hard copy provided by Rupnow. Motion by Wiedenfeld, 2nd by Fry to accept. Motion carried.

ROADS & BRIDGES: Bid openings for new trucks/equipment: all bids for the same options, automatic International

Debauche – Dan Schwabenbauer present and provides details; availability is for 2025; front end service on 4x4 recommended annually; have partnership with LaFarge Truck Center for service and parts

4x2 (model HV507) = \$115,185.00

4x4 = \$138,625.00

Lakeside –

4x2 (2023) = \$112,882.00

4x2 (2024) = \$116,509.00

4x4 (2023) = \$134,250.00

4x4 (2024) = \$138,282.00

Discussion on heavy ton pickup truck as second truck option versus International; Motion by Wiedenfeld to accept bid from Debauche of \$138,625.00 for 2025 4x4 model, 2nd by Fry to accept. Motion carried. Willis signs bid to accept.

Bids for Equipment – stainless steel box, 12ft plow, and 9ft wing, installed.

Universal = \$99,761.00

Monroe = \$112,446.00

Motion by Fry to accept bid of \$99,761.00 from Universal for truck equipment, 2nd by Wiedenfeld to accept. Motion carried. Moe notes a couple of road signs/stop signs that were down in the township that have been/are being repaired.

FIBER CABLE: Dave Bangert speaks about Wisconsin Broadband Grant that he is applying for with WiConnect Wireless. This grant is to help providers improve internet connectivity in under-served areas. Having partnerships with municipalities provides “preference points” in the grant application. He is seeking a letter of commitment from the Township to include in the grant application. It would cost approximately 1.2 million dollars to complete fiber for all 42 miles in Willow Township. He is asking for \$595,000.00 in the grant. There are 161 homes in Willow Township that are currently not serviced by fiber, the commitment from the Township would go toward the connection of these homes (“drop in”) of these residences. Motion by Fry to commit \$50,000.00 of ARPA funds to WiConnect Wireless to support fiber internet installation in the Town of Willow. 2nd by Wiedenfeld to accept. Motion carried.

ZONING: None.

BILL PAYING: Motion by Wiedenfeld, 2nd by Fry to approve orders 22035-22074. Motion carried.

FIRE & AMBULANCE: Fry gives update for RCFD – new radio system approved in Richland County, former Chief Brian Jones was appointed as Assistant Chief. Richland Ambulance service is moving to old REC building. Willis gives update on Cazenovia Fire – They are still in the process of updating the contract.

TOWN SHOP: Extension for final date of completion is April 29th, 2022; no final bill from Friede at this time. The open house will be scheduled for a time in the future. Moe notes he would like to see the blacktop completed this year.

MINE TRAINING: Scheduled for Monday April 6th. Moe will attend, would like Clyde Mueller to attend also. Cost is \$70.00 each.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: Board of Review – set for May 4th, 2022 at 5:30pm; Annual Meeting – set for April 20th, 2022 at 6pm; Road Review – will be set at next meeting; Spring Clean Up – will be set to align with Richland County’s clean up day.

PUBLIC INPUT: Rupnow notes the addition of two poll workers to the poll worker list for the 2021-2022 Election Term, requested John and Cheryl McNurlin be added to the list. Motion by Fry to amend the poll worker list to include John and Cheryl McNurlin, 2nd by Wiedenfeld. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday April 7th, 2022 at 6 PM.

ADJOURN: Motion by Fry, 2nd by Wiedenfeld at 8:26 PM.

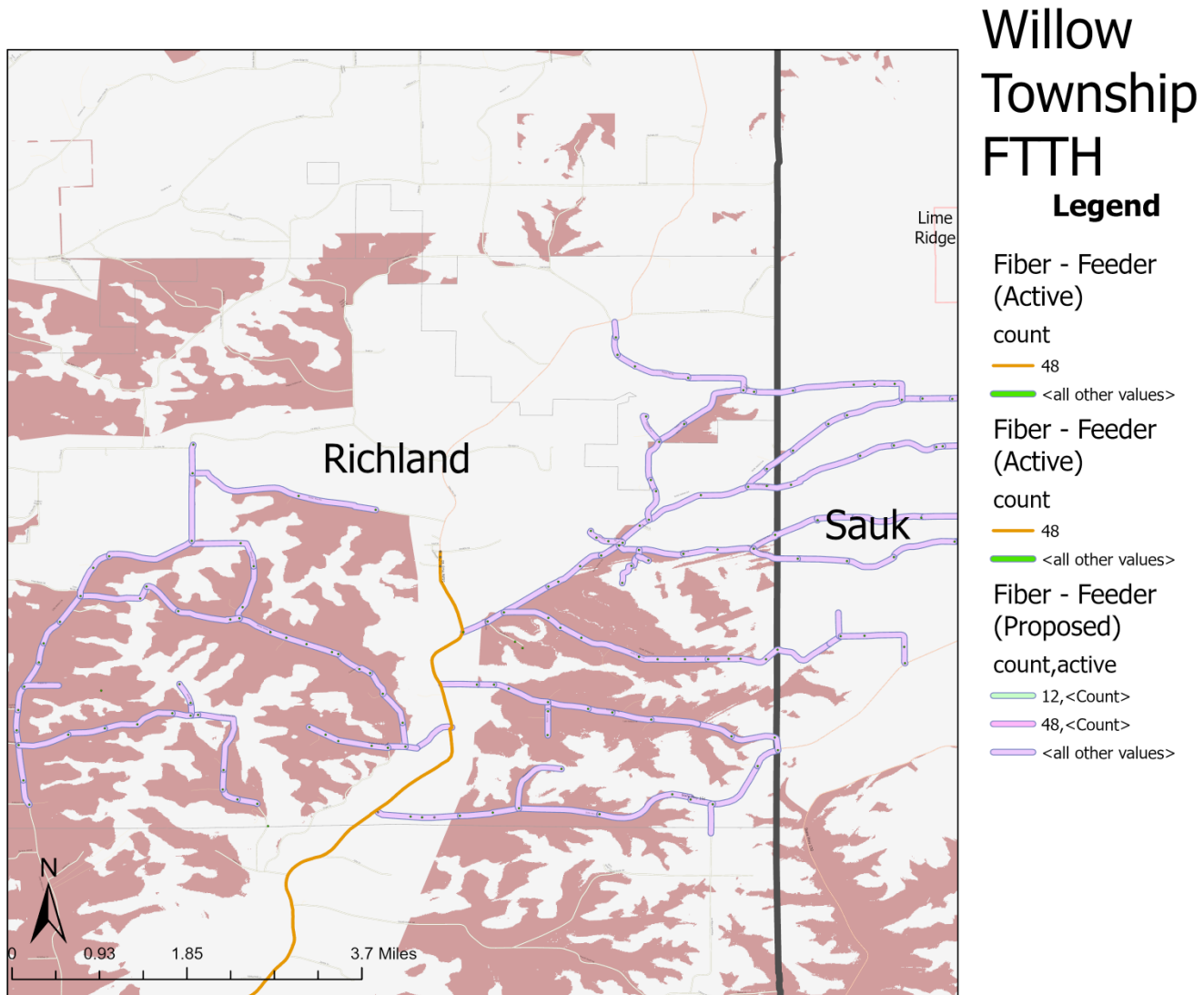
Devon Rupnow, Clerk

3.2.2 Project Description

3.2.2.A: Mapping

Willow Township FTTH (Fiber To The Home) Broadband Expansion

Map below shows each road that is planned as part of this construction project. Total Mileage of roads in Willow Township covered by this proposal is approximately 42 miles. Some areas of Sauk County where roads need to be completed to meet existing mainline Fiber. Each of the roads proposed does have a portion of that road covered by wireless providers but a majority of these roads are under-served. The map shows our active fiber along State Hwy 58 in orange. Proposed township roads are in blue. The red areas of the map are considered underserved from the latest PSC broadband map.



3.2.2.B: Current Services

As shown with the maps included with this proposal, the terrain in Willow Township is hills and valleys. Currently Willow Township is serviced by Frontier Communications as its local CLEC. There are no existing DSL services in most of the areas proposed in this grant. The Northern part of the township has last-mile fiber

from LaValle Telephone Cooperative with a grant from the state broadband fund. The area already serviced by fiber along State Hwy 58 is not part of the areas that are being requested for funding. WiConnect Wireless provides services to a majority of these areas through our existing wireless network. Forty five percent of all the homes proposed in the grant are already customers of WiConnect Wireless fixed wireless internet solution. They are able to receive wireless internet connectivity from US Cellular, ATT wireless, Verizon Wireless, and BugTussel Wireless. Existing service providers are unable able to provide consistent service into many of the valleys and rural areas of Willow Township.

3.2.2.C: Broadband Access

The following table shows homes per road, business per road, and existing customers that WiConnect Wireless currently provides service through our fixed wireless internet solution.

Road Names	Homes Passed	Businesses Passed	Existing Customers	Underserved Homes
Hwy NN	22	3	17	21
Anderson Road -Hustlers Ridge	8	1	3	8
Ripchen Lane	2	1	0	2
Dog Hollow Road	18	3	5	18
Jewet Lane	2	0	2	2
Louis Lane	2	0	2	2
Buckta Hill Dr	4	1	1	4
Harper Lane	1	0	0	1
Coop Woods Road	2	0	0	2
Wheat Hollow Road	17	3	9	17
Spencer Hill Road	2	1	0	2
Smith Hollow Road	17	5	15	16
Robin Hollow Road	17	3	6	17
Rustic View Road	6	1	2	6
Pregal Hill Road	4	0	1	4
Pregal Drive	4	1	0	4
Lost Hollow to Hwy 58	14	2	9	14
Rentz Road	4	1	0	4
Hillpoint Road	4	2	0	4
Hickory Glen Road	11	2	0	11
Totals	161	30	72	159

WiConnect Wireless Current Fiber Service Plan pricing:

Internet Plan	Download/Upload	Pricing
Fiber Premium	100Mbps/100Mbps	\$63.00/Month
Fiber Platinum	200Mbps/200Mbps	\$73.00/Month
Fiber 500	500Mbps/500Mbps	\$130.00/Month
Fiber 1000	1Gpbs/1Gbps	\$200.00/Month
Custom Packages		

3.2.2.D: Last Mile Proposal

Willow Township FTTH project will be a last-mile fiber construction project utilizing our existing Mainline Fiber.

3.2.2.E: Proposed Service Info

WiConnect Wireless proposes to construct a Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) system offering dedicated download and uploads speeds up to 1Gps, consisting of buried fiber optic cable and conduit, utilizing a Gigabit Passive Optical Network, or GPON architecture. GPON standards can scale to even faster speeds as technology and GPON standards improve with only upgrades to the electronics on either end of the fiber optic cable. We have not yet reached the theoretical limit of how much information can be transmitted along a fiber optic cable, especially when utilizing Wave Division Multiplexing (WDM), which simply means combining multiple “colors” of light on a single fiber. Fiber optics allow for the highest quality and dependability for broadband and telecommunication services as there is very little maintenance involved with a FTTH system. Fiber is immune to weather conditions such as temperature, lightning, and electromagnetic interference that plague typical copper and cable systems. Additionally, underground facilities provide for the longest life and safest for the outside plant as wind and storms rarely affect underground plant, arguably providing for better public safety.

3.2.2.F: Not Applicable

3.2.2.G: Build-out Schedule

Below is a rough projection of the buildout schedule by week: Completion dates are based on past performance data collected in similar ground and terrain conditions. Weather, material availability and equipment issues are not figured into this proposed schedule. These schedules are also developed with terrain and proximity constraints already planned for.

Road Names	Week #
Hwy NN to Hwy D	Week 1-4
Anderson Road to Hustlers Ridge	week 5-6
Ripchen Lane	Week 6
Dog Hollow Road	Week 7-10
Jewet Lane	Week 10
Louis Lane	Week 10
Buckta Hill Dr	Week 11
Harper Lane	Week 12
Coop Woods Road	Week 13
Wheat Hollow Road	Week 14-16
Smith Hollow Road	Week 17-20
Robin Hollow Road	Week 21-22
Rustic View Road	Week 23
Pregal Hill Road	Week 24
Pregal Drive	Week 25-25
Lost Hollow to Hwy 58	Week 26-27
Rentz Road	Week 27-28

Hillpoint Road
Hickory Glen Road

Week 29-32
Week 34-36

3.2.3 Itemized Budget

3.2.3.A: Material Costs per Road

The Willow Township project requires around \$560,000 worth of materials to build the mainline fiber on each road of the project. We are sourcing everything possible from Wisconsin based companies including fiber from Millennium in Delevan WI and Teel Pipe from Baraboo WI. The cost projections for construction materials for the project are detailed below:

Willow Township Roads	Fiber Cost	Conduit Cost	Splice	Vault	Pedestal	Splice Closure	Ground	Total
Hwy NN to Hwy D Anderson Road	\$13,124	\$24,229	\$1,120	\$16,800	\$5,280	\$9,065	\$3,150	\$72,768
Ripchen Lane	\$4,805	\$8,870	\$224	\$3,360	\$4,320	\$1,813	\$630	\$24,022
Dog Hollow Road	\$2,196	\$4,055	\$128	\$1,440	\$720	\$777	\$270	\$9,587
Jewet Lane	\$10,433	\$19,261	\$544	\$8,160	\$4,800	\$4,403	\$1,530	\$49,132
Louis Lane	\$1,098	\$2,028	\$64	\$960	\$480	\$518	\$180	\$5,328
Buckta Hill Dr	\$1,373	\$2,534	\$96	\$1,440	\$480	\$777	\$270	\$6,970
Harper Lane	\$2,910	\$5,373	\$128	\$2,400	\$1,200	\$1,295	\$450	\$13,756
Coop Woods Road	\$549	\$1,014	\$32	\$480	\$240	\$259	\$90	\$2,664
Wheat Hollow Road	\$1,647	\$3,041	\$96	\$1,440	\$480	\$777	\$270	\$7,752
Spencer Hill Road	\$10,680	\$19,718	\$576	\$8,640	\$4,800	\$4,662	\$1,620	\$50,696
Smith Hollow Road	\$3,432	\$6,336	\$192	\$1,920	\$720	\$1,036	\$360	\$13,996
Robin Hollow Road	\$14,524	\$26,814	\$736	\$11,040	\$5,280	\$5,957	\$2,070	\$66,421
Rustic View Road	\$10,186	\$18,805	\$512	\$8,160	\$5,280	\$4,403	\$1,530	\$48,876
Pregal Hill Road	\$5,711	\$10,543	\$288	\$3,840	\$1,680	\$2,072	\$720	\$24,854
Pregal Drive	\$4,146	\$7,654	\$224	\$3,360	\$960	\$1,813	\$630	\$18,787
Lost Hollow - Hwy 58	\$8,731	\$16,119	\$448	\$6,720	\$1,200	\$3,626	\$1,260	\$38,104
Rentz Road	\$7,715	\$14,243	\$384	\$5,760	\$3,360	\$3,108	\$1,080	\$35,650
	\$2,910	\$5,373	\$160	\$2,400	\$960	\$1,295	\$450	\$13,548

Hillpoint Road	\$6,287	\$11,608	\$320	\$4,800	\$1,440	\$2,590	\$900	\$27,945
Hickory Glen Road	\$5,574	\$10,290	\$384	\$5,760	\$2,400	\$3,108	\$1,080	\$28,595
Totals	\$118,033	\$217,908	\$6,656	\$98,880	\$46,080	\$53,354	\$18,540	\$559,451

With the current state of the supply chain and price inflation, predicting future materials pricing is difficult. We are estimating an additional 10 percent cost above what the current cost of the materials to help minimize the effects of supply chain volatility.

3.2.3.B: Grant Proceeds

No expenses for monthly bandwidth costs or other recurring costs will be used from grant proceeds.

3.2.3.C: Grant Proceeds Usage

Requested funds will only be used for materials to construct broadband infrastructure in underserved areas.

3.2.4 Priority Factors Supporting Application

3.2.4.A: Matching Funds

The matching funds for this project come from the operation of WiConnect Wireless. We currently serve over 2000 wireless, cable internet and tv, and fiber internet customers. The costs for our matching funds are made up of both Labor and Construction equipment expenses. Our labor rates are based on current crew of four employees with an average installation of around 1500 to 2000 feet per day.

Hourly Rate of Mainline Construction Labor	\$145
Average footage per day	1500
Hours per day	8
Daily Labor Rate	\$1,160

Total Labor Cost **\$208,800.00**

Our Construction equipment lease and maintenance costs are shown in the chart below

Construction Equipment Rental per hour	
Vermeer Directional Drill	\$130
Vermeer Trencher	\$45
Trucks/Trailers	\$45
Mini ex	\$45

Total Construction Equipment $\$265/\text{hr} \times 40\text{hrs} \times 36\text{wks}$ **\$381,600.00**

Splicing operations for each vault, pedestal, and home are also included in our total labor amount for this project. Our splicing crew averages about 4 hours per vault in a rural 48 Count fiber installation. This calculates out to about \$55,000 in labor for our splicing operations

Splicing Crew Costs	
Costs per hour	\$85
Average Hours per Vault	4
Vaults	206
Total Splicing Operations	\$70,040

Drop installation crew averages about 2 drops per day in normal conditions and the costs associated with this project are calculated based on past performance of our Ithaca and Seneca Fiber projects. The cost of install per home is projected at \$83,000.

Home Drop Installation Costs	
Total Drop Labor	\$33,345
Total Drop Material	\$21,375
Total Electronics	\$28,215
Total Home Installation Costs	\$82,935

Total matching funds for this project are \$699,000 in construction equipment and labor. This project would take approximately 36 weeks to complete. Customers would be added as each road or leg of the network is completed.

3.2.4.B: Willow Township Partnership

Funds provided from Willow Township would be used to offset the cost of the home installations component of this project. Each tax payer of the township will see a benefit from the grant monies used to support the project.

3.2.4.C: Existing Broadband Service

As shown in the Homes per road chart in section 3.2.2.C: there are currently 77 homes and business that are serviced by our existing fixed wireless internet services. These customers have little or no service from the local Clec provider Frontier. Some of those valleys do not have cellular service providers that are currently able to provide cellular data services. Those who can receive cellular service can get service from one of three providers, US Cellular, AT&T Wireless, Verizon Wireless. Bug Tussel wireless also provides fixed wireless service to some of these areas.

Most of the customers who would be able to receive DSL services from Frontier are working with speeds less than 5Mbps and it is currently inadequate for the demands of online schooling and working from home requirements.

3.2.4.D: Project Impact

From past experience and from a perspective of our existing customers around 80 percent of the homes will be signing up for service in our proposed area. As an example of our estimation of future performance based on past performance, we will use our Hwy 130 Fiber project in Bear Valley that was completed as of August 2021 as an example. We had 51 homes along Hwy 130 and Hwy JJ that we passed during our construction. Currently 47 of those homes have been installed with WiConnect Wireless fiber internet service. Of those 51 homes 44 of them had been customers of our fixed wireless internet service.

3.2.4.E: Scalability

Many of our existing customers would see large increases in capacity and reliability with a fiber internet connection that we would provide to their home. We would be able to provide additional service such as Telephone, Television, Security, and specialized data circuits over this fiber plant. Locating businesses in this rural community would now be possible as access to the resources needed to support them would be available. WiConnect Wireless fiber plant would have the capacity to expand to 10Gps to the home in the future with very little change needed in the physical plant infrastructure. Our infrastructure would provide all the needed capacity requirements for the foreseeable future.

We would also be able to link this network to additional network nodes over the next several years to create even further redundancy to our fiber plant including multiple internet providers and paths to the internet. This would allow for a more reliable internet connection as we continue to expand our network. We currently own and operate the cable tv and internet plant in Loganville Wisconsin and intend to build fiber to that plant to allow for us to deliver TV from that head end facility to all our existing Fiber and Fixed Wireless customers.

3.2.3.F: Economic Impact

WiConnect Wireless and its Fiber to the Home Buildout adds some great economic benefits to the communities it services. These impacts are highlighted in three main areas of importance:

- Home Values
 - A study by the Fiber Broadband Association in 2014 showed that the value of a home that has Fiber Internet increased its value by 3.1%. This impact will help to boost sales of homes and help with supporting the building of new homes in these serviced areas.
- Local Economic Impact
 - WiConnect Hires people from within the communities we service. We support our customers in our networks with local technicians. We help keep skilled jobs in our local rural economies allowing us to support other local businesses while building and growing our business.
 - Many of our customers support our ideas of smaller community-based services vs large corporations or co-ops controlling all access to broadband.
 - Our Local, State and City governments benefit from higher GDP.
 - Willow Township will be able to attract new business as well as keep existing businesses growing with access to high-capacity internet.
- Access To World Markets
 - Ability for business to gain access to world economies
 - Knowledge available through distance learning
 - Impact on Educational resources improving
 - Impact on Health Care as distance medicine becomes available via improved internet access

WiConnect Wireless employees live and work in the communities that we serve. We are a local company dedicated to installing, maintaining, and supporting internet and technology in those communities. The impact on the local economy of providing reliable fiber internet to these rural areas is hard to quantify in numbers. However, local realtors have expressed the heavy purchasing impact of what internet availability there is to

homes since the Covid outbreak. Some studies have shown up to 7% higher values of homes with fiber internet over other forms of internet connectivity. For this rural community it would allow for the possibility of greater workforce availability for existing employers both locally and globally. The additional bandwidth would also support online schooling and learning capabilities that are now limited by lack of available bandwidth. Businesses that are struggling with bandwidth limitations would also be able to be more competitive and have the resources needed to grow their business and be competitive in an ever-changing online marketplace.

[3.2.3.G: Broadband Service to Adjacent Areas](#)

WiConnect Wireless installation of fiber to the home will not interfere with any future expansion by other providers in the future. Each of the roads in question currently only have old copper installed on one side of the road ROW. We normally try to install our facilities on the opposite side of the road from existing services unless the terrain and cost is prohibitive.

This fiber buildout will actually improve the ability for us to deliver better service to the areas not directly installed with fiber. Several tower sites providing existing customers with fixed wireless internet connectivity will also be able to be installed with fiber as we go past our existing tower sites. This will improve the capacity to our fixed wireless customers on our network.

[3.2.5 Supporting Information](#)

[3.2.5.A: WiConnect Wireless History](#)

WiConnect Wireless has spent the last 15 years building a reliable fixed wireless network to provide last mile connectivity to some of the most challenging areas of the Southwestern Corner of Wisconsin. Our network provides services to over 2000 customers in the hardest to serve areas of this driftless region. We have built this network with support from the communities that we service and with loyal support from thousands of customers. We are continuing with that tradition of bringing service to the hardest to reach customers with our fiber internet GPON solutions. Help with funding on projects like this will ensure that we can continue to grow and provide these last mile services to our existing customers and continue to support our operations while doing so.

WiConnect Wireless received a fixed wireless Wisconsin Broadband Grant in 2014 in the amount of \$35,469, the first year that the Wisconsin Broadband Grants were released. This grant helped us to build out some challenging sites in Sauk and Iowa Counties in the Wisconsin River Valley. Those sites have been upgraded several times since 2014 but continue to provide much needed internet connectivity to underserved areas.

Over the past five years WiConnect Wireless has been adding equipment and crew to support our own fiber buildout projects in both Richland and Crawford Counties. In 2020 we invested in and installed around 15 miles of mainline fiber providing services to around 150 homes and businesses along HWY 58. We also installed fiber in the village of Seneca in Crawford County. In 2021 we installed 17 miles of Fiber in Richland County to provide fiber to rural areas of Hwy 130 in Bear Valley from Lone Rock WI. We added an additional 100 homes and 5 businesses with fiber internet. This build is completely paid for by our operations and fiscal responsibility.

We currently employ 4 full time mainline crew employees, 1 fiber splicer, 2 drop crew employees and 4 support staff. We operate a call center to support our customers and provide computer support services from the same

offices. Our existing business supports both wireless and wired customers in 7 counties in Southwestern Wisconsin.

Our existing business model has afforded us the ability to use profits from existing operations to support and finance our fiber build outs in these communities. We still have several challenges to our projects as funding these rural areas takes many years to gain a return on our investment. However, that mainline investment now allows us the ability to service areas that we were unable to service before. A grant to help us build these rural communities would allow us to continue to build and grow as we provide internet to the communities that we live and work in.

3.2.5.B: Service Duplication

WiConnect Fiber to the Home will not duplicate any services of high-speed internet in the service areas that we are proposing.

3.2.5.C: Financial Information

WiConnect Wireless is a financially sound company. WiConnect Wireless supports its fiber installation operations with our current staff and pay for our materials as we build the fiber plant. We have a small line of credit with our local bank to support larger material purchases when needed.

3.2.5.I: Letters of Support

Several letters have been shared in support of our current fixed wireless internet and our fiber expansion projects.

March 13, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Martin Fargen and I am the owner and operator of Precision Power Sports, LLC. and Lone Rock Storage, LLC. My business office is located in the rural Wisconsin township of Willow. I am writing on behalf of WiConnect with whom my internet service has been obtained for the past 10 years.

As with most businesses, my ability to operate depends on my access to internet. The entirety of my service manuals, parts diagrams and parts ordering is all completed completely online. All of my billing, invoicing and communication with customers is also completed online. I could not do business without the reliability of WiConnect. WiConnect is the connection that allows me to provide my business in this rural area.

WiConnect has superior attributes over any other companies. Their service is reliable and prompt. Economically, WiConnect provides competitive and low-price options to it's coverage area. As the established internet service provider of this area, WiConnect knows the land and people. They know and listen to their customer's needs. Without having the internet service from WiConnect, I would not have been able to sustain or grow my businesses. As businesses of Southwest Wisconsin continue to compete, collaborate and communicate with the economy of the world market, we will build our growth on the backbone of local area internet service providers such as WiConnect.

WiConnect is a necessary tool for Southwest Wisconsin businesses. It has been a fantastic supporter of local youth, school and community programs. It is business like WiConnect that strong communities are made of.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. It is with my highest recommendation that I encourage you to consider WiConnect. It is the business that will lead us into the next generation of internet.

Most sincerely,

Martin Fargen

Precision Power Sports, LLC.
Lone Rock Storage, LLC.
20823 Kulosa Ln.
Cazenovia, WI 53924
(608) 532-6840



Date: March 15, 2022

RE: Wiconnect Wireless LLC – Grant Application
Towns of Ithaca, Willow, and Buena Vista
Richland County, Wisconsin

To whom this may concern:

I am writing at this time as a local taxpayer and business owner serving the community as a Real Estate Broker residing and working in all the townships listed above. I would like to express to you on how important it is in our community to have an opportunity to get internet service to rural homes and I support grant opportunities to getting this available to all.

As a realtor working through the COVID pandemic the last two plus years we have seen a high demand to buyers wanting to relocate to a more rural setting. COVID has allow us to school children from home, parents, individuals, and business to work from home for the protection on the family and that of the public. The first question once was does the property have cell phone coverage, now first questions is their high-speed internet available.

Covid has in many ways impacted all our lives in a way that will affect how we go forward in our daily lives forever and has made us realize the importance of being able to receive internet at one's home. Those less fortunate to be without internet really struggle and you now see that more and more. You see families having to go to a local library for access to a student sitting a parking lot to get free Wi-Fi to download homework, and we are better that that!

Having internet opportunities is a win for the community and keeps people here within our rural townships paying taxes which in turn keeps our schools growing and keeps out kids here to work and be parents themselves one day to grow a stronger community.

Please consider the communities listed above and let's bring internet to everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to listen and let me express my views.

Sincerely,

Ted Greenheck,
Realtor, Land surveyor and Insurance Broker
Driftless Area Group
tedgreenheck@driftlessareallc.com

27128 Hwy 14 • Richland Center WI 53581 • PH: 608-647-9050 • Fax: 608-647-9080

March 14, 2022

Re: High Speed Internet

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as a letter of support for the application to install and upgrade the Internet infrastructure for the township of Willow and Ithaca located in Richland County proposed by Wi Connect Wireless.

Consistently the number one challenge we are hearing from businesses and entrepreneurs is the lack of adequate Internet service. This is now compounded by the added need of our students and teachers as we deal with the pandemic. Many of our businesses have moved their operations to their employees homes. High-speed Internet is vital to the present and future of these communities and our region.

As the regional economic development entity for southwest Wisconsin, we realize this need and fully support the application and efforts to install infrastructure in this area of Richland County and Sauk County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Abby M. Haas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Abby" being more prominent than the last name "Haas".

Abby Haas
President
Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin



TODD NOVAK

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 51ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-7502
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0051
Rep.Novak@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8933
Madison, WI 53708-8933

03/16/2022

Wisconsin Broadband Office
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
Hill Farms State Office Building
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Broadband Expansion Grant Program Review Committee,

I would like to express my support for WiConnect Wireless's Broadband Expansion Grant application for its proposed project in the service area near the Town of Willow in Richland County. The project proposes to provide fiber broadband to 161 eligible homes, 30 businesses, and covers 42 miles along roadways in rural areas near the Town of Willow.

Improving broadband access and speeds in rural areas, such as those surrounding the Town of Willow, is costly due to low customer density. This project is currently estimated to cost over \$1.25 million. WiConnect Wireless is seeking a grant for the estimated costs which amount to \$559,000. WiConnect Wireless intends to build over 42 miles of new fiber which will reach nearly 200 eligible locations.

WiConnect Wireless is ready to help facilitate deploying broadband networks in rural Wisconsin. Grant funding to deploy fiber in the area around the Town of Willow will accelerate fiber deployment. Absent the grant funding, these upgrades may not occur for several years. The potential impact of this funding within areas of the 51st Assembly District is significant.

Lack of access to high speed internet is a concern that I continue to hear from numerous constituents struggling with this issue. Residents in the rural areas need improved broadband service for business, education, and telehealth. Without adequate broadband service small businesses have difficulty operating, students struggle to complete homework, and in-home patient monitoring and telehealth visits are nearly impossible. These issues existed prior to the pandemic; yet they were highlighted and exacerbated as life went virtual during the early portions of the pandemic. As we emerge and recover from the pandemic, we have an opportunity to correct this inequity and provide increased connectivity by awarding these grant funds. I urge you to support this application and request that you award grant funding to WiConnect Wireless in order to address the urgent needs of residents in and around the Town of Willow.

Sincerely,

State Representative
51st Assembly District
Wisconsin Legislature

Conclusion

WiConnect Wireless has a proven track record of providing reliable internet to very rural markets of Southwestern Wisconsin. Our service provides a large economic impact in the communities we service by providing hi paying technical and skilled labor wages. The additional economic impact of fiber internet to this rural community will help to make Willow Township and more enjoyable place to live and work. We look forward to continuing to provide a much-needed service to our family, friends, neighbors, and business owners for many years to come.